

Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation
Water Resources Division
Water Rights Bureau

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
For Routine Actions with Limited Environmental Impact

Note: Instructions to DNRC staff for preparing this EA can be found at:
http://www.dnrc.state.mt.us/eis_ea.html

Part I. Proposed Action Description

1. *Applicant/Contact name and address:*

Grizzly Creek Ranches LLC
1828 Old Yellowstone Trail South
Emigrant, MT 59027
2. *Type of action:* Application for Beneficial Water Use Permit # 30022802-43B
3. *Water source name:* Groundwater
4. *Location affected by project:* SENWSWNW, SEC. 11, T8S, R6E, Park, Co.
5. *Narrative summary of the proposed project, purpose, action to be taken, and benefits:* The applicant is applying for a water right to supply a ranch which happens to be located in the Yellowstone Controlled Groundwater Area. The new appropriation is asking for 25 GPM and 3.5 acre-feet for domestic and irrigation uses.
6. *Agencies consulted during preparation of the Environmental Assessment:*
(include agencies with overlapping jurisdiction)

Montana Department of Environmental Quality
Montana State Historic Preservation Office
Montana Natural Resource Information System
Park County Planning Office
Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks

Part II. Environmental Review

1. Environmental Impact Checklist:

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

WATER QUANTITY, QUALITY AND DISTRIBUTION

Water quantity - Assess whether the source of supply is identified as a chronically or periodically dewatered stream by DFWP. Assess whether the proposed use will worsen the already dewatered condition.

Determination: The source is groundwater. No impacts to streams are identified.

Water quality - Assess whether the stream is listed as water quality impaired or threatened by DEQ, and whether the proposed project will affect water quality.

Determination: No impacts to water quality have been identified.

Groundwater - Assess if the proposed project impacts ground water quality or supply. If this is a groundwater appropriation, assess if it could impact adjacent surface water flows.

Determination: The appropriation is for groundwater in the amount of 25 gpm to supply domestic and landscape irrigation purposes.

DIVERSION WORKS - Assess whether the means of diversion, construction and operation of the appropriation works of the proposed project will impact any of the following: channel impacts, flow modifications, barriers, riparian areas, dams, well construction.

Determination: the diversion will be a well with a 2-3 H.P. pump. Water will be distributed via pipeline.

UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES

Endangered and threatened species - Assess whether the proposed project will impact any threatened or endangered fish, wildlife, plants or aquatic species or any "species of special concern," or create a barrier to the migration or movement of fish or wildlife. For groundwater, assess whether the proposed project, including impacts on adjacent surface flows, would impact any threatened or endangered species or "species of special concern."

Determination: The Montana Natural Heritage Program was contacted. The Gray wolf, Canada Lynx, and brown bear may be found within Sec 11 T8S R6E, Park County.

Wetlands - Consult and assess whether the apparent wetland is a functional wetland (according to COE definitions), and whether the wetland resource would be impacted.

Determination: No wetlands have been identified in the project area.

Ponds - For ponds, consult and assess whether existing wildlife, waterfowl, or fisheries resources would be impacted.

Determination: This project does not involve a pond. No impact to existing resources.

GEOLOGY/SOIL QUALITY, STABILITY AND MOISTURE - *Assess whether there will be degradation of soil quality, alteration of soil stability, or moisture content. Assess whether the soils are heavy in salts that could cause saline seep.*

Determination: This new well, barn and cabins should not impact soil quality, alter soil stability, or moisture content. There is no saline seep in this area.

VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY/NOXIOUS WEEDS - *Assess impacts to existing vegetative cover. Assess whether the proposed project would result in the establishment or spread of noxious weeds.*

Determination: A small area was disturbed by drilling the well, and will be disturbed when the house is built. These disturbed areas may likely be reseeded.

AIR QUALITY - *Assess whether there will be a deterioration of air quality or adverse effects on vegetation due to increased air pollutants.*

Determination: There should be no significant impact to air quality from this well.

HISTORICAL AND ARCHEOLOGICAL SITES - *Assess whether there will be degradation of unique archeological or historical sites in the vicinity of the proposed project.*

Determination: SHPO has been contacted. They stated that any cultural properties that may have been in the area have already been impacted.

DEMANDS ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES OF LAND, WATER, AND ENERGY - *Assess any other impacts on environmental resources of land, water and energy not already addressed.*

Determination: No additional impacts on other environmental resources were identified.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS - *Assess whether the proposed project is inconsistent with any locally adopted environmental plans and goals.*

Determination: The Park County Planning Board has no restrictions against drilling new wells in the Tom Miner Basin.

ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF RECREATIONAL AND WILDERNESS ACTIVITIES - *Assess whether the proposed project will impact access to or the quality of recreational and wilderness activities.*

Determination: This area is private property, with no access to public recreational or wilderness activities. No impact is expected.

HUMAN HEALTH - *Assess whether the proposed project impacts on human health.*

Determination: No impact on human health is expected on human health.

PRIVATE PROPERTY - *Assess whether there are any government regulatory impacts on private property rights.*

Yes___ No x___ *If yes, analyze any alternatives considered that could reduce, minimize, or eliminate the regulation of private property rights.*

Determination:

OTHER HUMAN ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES - *For routine actions of limited environmental impact, the following may be addressed in a checklist fashion.*

Impacts on:

- (a) Cultural uniqueness and diversity? No Impact identified.
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- (b) Local and state tax base and tax revenues? No Impact identified.
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- (c) Existing land uses? No Impact identified.
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- (d) Quantity and distribution of employment? No Impact identified.
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- (e) Distribution and density of population and housing? No Impact identified.
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- (f) Demands for government services? No Impact identified.
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- (g) Industrial and commercial activity? No Impact identified.
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- Utilities? No Impact identified.
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- (i) Transportation? No Impact identified.
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- (j) Safety? No Impact identified.

(k) Other appropriate social and economic circumstances?

2. Secondary and cumulative impacts on the physical environment and human population:

Secondary Impacts No secondary impacts identified

Cumulative Impacts No Cumulative impacts identified

3. Describe any mitigation/stipulation measures:

None identified at this time.

4. Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives to the proposed action, including the no action alternative, if an alternative is reasonably available and prudent to consider:

PART III. Conclusion

1. Preferred Alternative: Proceed with the project as planned.

2 Comments and Responses: None at this time.

3. Finding:

Yes___ No x___ Based on the significance criteria evaluated in this EA, is an EIS required?

If an EIS is not required, explain why the EA is the appropriate level of analysis for this proposed action: An EA is adequate for the scope of this project.

Name of person(s) responsible for preparation of EA:

Name: Porter Dassenko

Title: Water Resource Specialist

Date: 10/2/06